

STATE PLAN UNDER TITLE XIX OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY ACT

State/Territory: California

ELIGIBILITY CONDITIONS AND REQUIREMENTS

Procedures for Scheduling and Conduct of Standard Surveys

The State has in effect the following procedures for the scheduling and conduct of standard surveys to assure that it has taken all reasonable steps to avoid giving notice.

The State takes the following actions to assure that standard surveys occur unannounced:

1. Training. Surveyor staff receive indoctrination as to the criticality of meeting the federal requirement for unannounced visits for the purpose of conducting standard surveys. This subject is carefully covered in their initial Academy training, in HCFA's Regional Office Orientation and in HCFA's Basic Surveyor Training program. Surveyor staff are also trained to alter the hours of visit entry to facilities in order to get a more complete, accurate view of the quality of health care practices in a facility.

2. Code of Conduct. The conduct of unannounced visits is a part of the surveyor's performance evaluation. Disregard of the standard is grounds for disciplinary action. Section 606 of the program's Policy and Procedure Manual specifically states that it is illegal for any employee of the program to give notice of an impending visit to any person connected with the facility to be visited.

3. Workload Scheduling. Survey and investigation workload scheduling is conducted by management and supervisory staff using automated management information. Last survey dates are reviewed for the opportunity to eliminate any predictable pattern in future scheduling. Survey schedules are held in confidence by supervisory and management staff and are released as part of the District's monthly work plan.

4. Contract Coordination. Licensing and Certification contracts with the Office of the State Fire Marshal for the conduct of the Life Safety Code survey in health facilities. Strong contract language has been added to the long-standing agreement between the agencies to reinforce the requirement for unannounced visits.

Continued

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Procedure for Scheduling and Conduct of Standard Surveys

The State takes the following steps in conducting facility surveys:

1. Standard surveys are scheduled according to a user-defined report from OSCARS. The report displays facilities according to ascending order to date of the current survey. These dates are used to monitor the 15-month maximum survey interval as well as the 12-month average for survey intervals.

2. The State maintains supplies of current HCFA survey forms in each of its District Offices and in the County of Los Angeles. Supervisors monitor the survey team's use of HCFA's forms as well as the protocols established in the State Operations Manual.

3. The State uses a centralized database of surveyor qualifications and record of required and additional training completed. Information from the centralized database is shared with District Managers and Administrators to assure that only qualified individuals approve survey documents.

4. The State maintains the policy discretion to conduct a special survey of a facility following a change in ownership or significant change in administrative or key health care personnel. Decisions to conduct these special surveys are made in consultation with Regional Office staff following examination of information concerning the quality of care at the facility.

5. The State conducts extended surveys immediately following a completed standard survey where there has been a finding of substandard care.

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